

**Division of Child Mental Health Services
Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families**

Procedures for Compliance with Staff Accountability

Section I. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to establish a mechanism for meeting the standards of staff accountability. The following key terms are defined as follows:

1. Direct Client Responsibilities – those activities performed by practitioners who:
 - meet with the client and family to conduct clinical assessments
 - write treatment plans in collaboration with the client and family based on the information gathered in the clinical assessment
 - implement treatment plans by regularly meeting with the client and family on-site at the agency or off site in other locations like home or school
 - evaluate and document client progress, modifying the treatment plan accordingly
2. Assessment Service – the systematic collection and review of client and family information including but not limited to a psychosocial history, collateral information, administering clinical interviews, and other more formal tests for the purpose of making treatment recommendations.
3. Licensure Requirements – in the State of Delaware, licensed professionals must comply with the requirements established by the Department of State, Division of Professional Regulation. Licenses recognized by DCMHS are:
 - Licensed Professional Counselor of Mental Health
 - Licensed Clinical Social Worker
 - Psychologist
 - Physicians with a specialty in psychiatry
 - Psych/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, with national certification in child/adolescent psych mental health
 - Psych/Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist, with national certification in child/adolescent psych mental health
 - Licensed Chemical Dependency Professional
 - Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Section II. Applicability Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to all direct and non-direct service staff:

1. All state employees follow the State Merit Rules of Personnel Administration published by the Office of Management and Budget: Human Resource Management which governs an individual's position and their professional responsibilities. This includes at minimum:
 - an annual employee performance plan
 - an annual professional development plan
 - annual evaluations of both plans
2. Employees of contractors are expected to adhere to their organization's personnel management system. This includes at minimum:
 - an annual employee performance plan
 - an annual professional development plan
 - annual evaluations of both plans
3. In addition to meeting the above state merit system rules or agency personnel policies, the following expectations apply to direct service staff:
 - All treatment staff are expected to practice within the scope of their licensure requirements.
 - Any unlicensed clinical staff providing direct treatment or assessment services through DCMHS or contractors must practice under the supervision of a licensed professional.
 - Any licensed clinical staff who are practicing independent of supervision and who are employed by DCMHS providing direct treatment or assessment services or who are supervising staff who do the same will submit their credentials to the DCMHS Credentialing Committee. These staff are identified during new employee orientation via the DCMHS Employee Face Sheet.
 - Any licensed clinical staff who are practicing independent of supervision and who are employed by contractors providing direct treatment or assessment services or who are supervising staff who do the same will submit their credentials to the DCMHS Credentialing Committee or to their own approved credentialing committee. These staff are identified within the initial contracting process via the Human Resources Data Form.

Section III. Application to the Credentialing Committee

1. Initial Appointment Process

New applicants must submit their credentials to the DCMHS Credentialing Committee within the first month of employment or within the first month of requesting appointment to the practitioner panel. The completed application, credentialing documents checklist and supporting documents are sent directly to the committee. The Credentialing Documents Checklist and General Directions outline the materials required for initial appointment. All applicant files are presented for committee review at the next monthly scheduled meeting and a recommendation as to acceptance of the applicant is rendered. Both the applicant and the DCMHS Unit Director or Agency CEO is notified in writing of the committee's decision, attaching a copy of the Credentialing Committee Review Form and the Credentialing Checklist. Applicants approved for initial appointment are credentialed for a three year period.

2. Reappointment Process

The applicant and the DCMHS Unit Director or Agency CEO is notified three months in advance of their appointment expiration date. The reappointment process will obtain only the information that has changed since the last appointment. (See the Credentialing Documents Checklist and General Directions outlining the required materials for reappointment.) A second notice is given one month prior to the date of the committee review summarizing any necessary materials not received. The process for continued appointment follows the same steps as indicated above in the initial application process, with the committee rendering a decision to accept or to suspend the reappointment. The reappointment period also extends for three years.

Section IV. Credentialing Committee

The Credentialing Committee operates in the manner outlined below:

1. Purpose – The Credentialing Committee is a statewide group appointed by DCMHS leadership to review and approve membership to its practitioner panel.
 2. Committee Members – The members are an interdisciplinary group of practitioners representing both state employee and network providers. The composition of the committee will generally reflect the proportion of those individuals being credentialed and may include ad hoc members for particular topic areas or to review specific specialties. Committee members are formally appointed by letter from the Division Director. The committee is chaired by a member of the DCMHS System Administration Unit (SA) in order to assure alignment with other contracting functions.
 3. Terms – Committee members are volunteers and shall serve for a period of two years. Individuals may serve additional terms if requested and approved by the Committee Chair. All efforts will be made to maintain a balanced membership as described above and to fill vacancies within a two month period. Any person appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term of the former member. Membership expires on the date specified in the appointment, except that each member shall serve until a successor is appointed.
2. Activities – The Credentialing Committee has primary responsibilities for:
- reviewing and approving policy and procedures related to staff accountability, most specifically those related to licensed practitioners as defined in Section II, #3 and #4 above.
 - reviewing and approving appointments and reappointments of these staff
 - reviewing to approve suspensions of appointments
 - recording minutes of all meetings and maintaining copies
 - reporting (via the chairperson) to leadership on a quarterly basis a summary of the group's activities
 - publishing credentialing meeting schedule with submission deadlines for documentation

Section V. Procedure for Suspension

DCMHS has the right to suspend practitioner panel membership for failure to submit completed credentialing information as required per DCMHS policy and/or contract. Upon suspension, the individual case will be forwarded to the SA Unit or DCMHS Unit Supervisor for contractual and/or personnel action as appropriate.

Reappointment to the practitioner panel is withheld until all the requirements are obtained and considered to be satisfactorily resolved. Requests for reappointment must be made formally in writing to the chairperson and are presented for consideration at the next published committee meeting. The provider is notified in writing of the committee's final decision, with a copy to the employee.